

## IMPROVED CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEM

### Background of the Invention

#### 1. Field of the Invention.

The present invention generally relates to camouflage clothing used for avoiding visual detection in natural environments, and more particularly to camouflage garments fabricated with individual panels adapted to permit a user to visually blend into the natural environment.

#### 2. Prior Art.

The use of manufactured camouflaged garments by hunters, photographers, soldiers and the like is disclosed in the prior art. Typically, camouflage material is used to produce a visually disruptive pattern and cause an individual to appear to become visually part of the adjacent natural environment and thereby avoid visual detection. Typically, the color and texture of camouflage garments permit the user to blend into the terrain and indigenous natural flora of a given geographical location.

A typical camouflage system disclosed by the prior art employs a net substrate on which is attached an overlay sheet material exhibiting a predetermined camouflage design. The attached sheet material is cut to form irregular edges, the shapes of which are purported to simulate patterns of vegetation and/or selected terrain. The problem with this camouflage system is inherent in the inflexibility of the construction to its inability to adapt to varied environments.

Where the camouflage elements of prior art garments are produced through the use of alterations to attached sheet material, the variations which can be produced are limited. The prior art generally affixes the sheet material to the net  
5 substrate in a uniform manner. This substantially limits the manner in which the camouflage system can be produced and, most importantly, the variety of natural environments in which they are able to simulate.

Another camouflage system disclosed by the prior  
10 art affixes camouflaging material in the form of burlap strips directly to the exterior of a garment. The burlap strips are dyed to colors which are intended to produce various shades of woodland colors producing a stringy, fuzzy appearance resembling naturally occurring moss. The inadequacies with this camouflage  
15 system is inherent in the inability to create visually diverse textures or images. The use of burlap strips provides a substantially uniform appearance and, even if provided with varied colorations, the natural environments in which they can be effectively used will be limited.

20 The present invention substantially resolves the problems inherent in those camouflage systems taught by the prior art. Garments in the form of jackets, hoods, trousers and the like are adapted to incorporate the present invention improved camouflage system along the exterior surface thereof. The  
25 present invention comprises an open loop fabric base substrate preferably in the form of interlaced matrix or netting. A

plurality of camouflage elements are used to implement objectives of the present invention. Each camouflage element comprises a central, elongated, planar mesh segment, each end thereof forming a pattern of lobes which simulates the specific natural environment which the camouflage element is to simulate. These would include leaves, tree branches or other similar naturally occurring structures. Each camouflage element is colored in a manner which directly relates to the environment where it is intended to be used. A plurality of camouflage elements are selectively coupled to strands of the interlaced netting to create a three-dimensional appearance which will cause the camouflage garment to blend into the natural environment for which it has been adapted.

#### Summary of the Invention

The present invention comprises an improved camouflage system to be incorporated into garments typically used by hunters, photographers, and the like for creating a visual impression which blends into the terrain and flora of natural environments. The present invention comprises a substrate of an open loop matrix of interlaced fabric typically fabricated from uniformly interlaced netting to which camouflage elements are coupled. The camouflage elements each comprise a planar mesh layer having a substantially uniform central, elongated section, the axial ends thereof being extended into end segments which are used to depict leaves or other natural flora. The camouflage elements are dyed or otherwise colored in a manner which will depict the colors of a selected natural environment. To improve

the ability to blend into the appearance of the selected natural environment, shaded indicia may also be imprinted or otherwise disposed upon the mesh of the camouflage element to depict structural elements of the natural environment such as branches or twigs of bushes and trees.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an improved camouflage system.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an improved camouflage system which employs camouflage elements which are preconfigured to visually simulate a natural environment.

It is still yet another object of the present invention to provide an improved camouflage system which employs camouflage elements which can be coupled to an underlying substrate to provide a three-dimensional depiction of environmental features.

It is still yet another object of the present invention to provide an improved camouflage system which is simple and inexpensive to fabricate.

The novel features which are believed to be characteristic of the invention, both as to its organization and method of operation, together with further objectives and advantages thereof, will be better understood from the following description considered in connection with the accompanying drawing in which a presently preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated by way of example. It is to be expressly understood, however, that the drawing is for the purpose of illustration and description

only, and is not intended as a definition of the limits of the invention.

#### Brief Description of the Drawing

FIGURE 1 is a partial view of a jacket and hood employing the present invention camouflage system.

FIGURES 2a and 2b illustrate forms of the camouflage elements used in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 3 is a partial plan view of interlaced netting and coupled camouflage elements in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 4 is a side elevation view of the interlaced netting and coupled camouflage elements shown in FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 5 is a partial view of a camouflage element illustrating imprinted indicia.

#### Description of the Presently Preferred Embodiment

An understanding of the present invention can be best gained by reference to FIGURE 1 which illustrates a partial view of a jacket and hood 10 employing the present invention camouflage system. It is understood the present invention camouflage system can be employed on any type of garment or fabric which is to be used for visual concealment in natural environments. The garment 10 is made up of a jacket 11 and hood 12 to be worn by the user. Garment 10 will be used to produce a pattern which would be visually disruptive to a viewer and cause the user to become a visual part of and appear to blend in with the natural environment. To accomplish this objective, garment 10 has

incorporated on the outer surface 13 thereof a camouflage system which is generally designated by the reference numeral 14.

Camouflage system 14 can be best seen by reference to FIGURES 2a, 2b, 3 - 5, inclusive. Camouflage system 14 employs a substrate 20 which comprises an open fabric base preferably in the form of interlaced netting. Although the preferred embodiment of the present invention utilizes interlaced netting to implement substrate 20, it is understood that other conventional mesh or open fabrics can be used in lieu thereof.

It is understood that the color and texture of the camouflage garment permit the user to visually blend into the terrain and indigenous natural flora of a given geographical location and thereby be visually concealed. This objective is achieved through the structure of camouflage elements 25a and 25b which are illustrated in FIGURES 2a and 2b, respectively.

Camouflage elements 25a and 25b each consist of a mesh substrate 26a and 26b respectively which are formed to depict elements of indigenous natural flora. In FIGURE 2a, an elongated central segment 27a is axially extended at either end thereof into multilobed segments 28a which generally depict or simulate the appearance of leaves from indigenous bushes, flowers or trees. As shown in FIGURE 2a, lobes 29a which are part of opposed segments 28a are in an opposed relationship to each other. In the form of the camouflage element 25b shown in FIGURE 2b, lobe segments 28b axially extend outwardly from central segment 27b and employ lobes 29b which are oriented toward each other.

It is an objective of the present invention to produce an improved camouflage system which exhibits coloration, texture and otherwise depicts the flora and background of the specific natural environment in which the present invention is to be employed. To accomplish this objective, depending on the environment where the present invention is being used, camouflage elements 25a and 25b are typically manufactured or dyed in a mixture of shades of brown, tan and/or green. As shown in FIGURE 5, printed indicia 30 are disposed upon the surface 31 of a camouflage element 32. Depending upon the environment in which the present invention is used, the indicia 30 will provide the illusion of structural elements in the environment such as tree branches or twigs.

The composite structure of the present invention can be best seen in FIGURES 3 and 4. Camouflage elements 25a and 25b are coupled to interlaced netting 14 at central segments 27a and 27b, respectively. The camouflage elements 25a and 25b may be coupled to net substrate 14 in any conventional manner including but not limited to staples, glue or by knotting. It is understood the number of camouflage elements 25a and 25b which are coupled to netting 14 and the placement thereof are sufficient to provide a three-dimensional image that visually blends into the specific environment where the present invention is employed. When camouflage elements 25a and 25b are coupled to net substrate 14, the structural rigidity of the mesh substrate will cause the camouflage elements 25a and 25b to be viewed in three dimensions.

In addition, the camouflage elements 25a and 25b can be placed along net substrate 14 in a manner which will enhance the concealing qualities of the camouflage system in a manner which can be adjusted or changed in accordance with the natural environment in which the camouflage system is being used.

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